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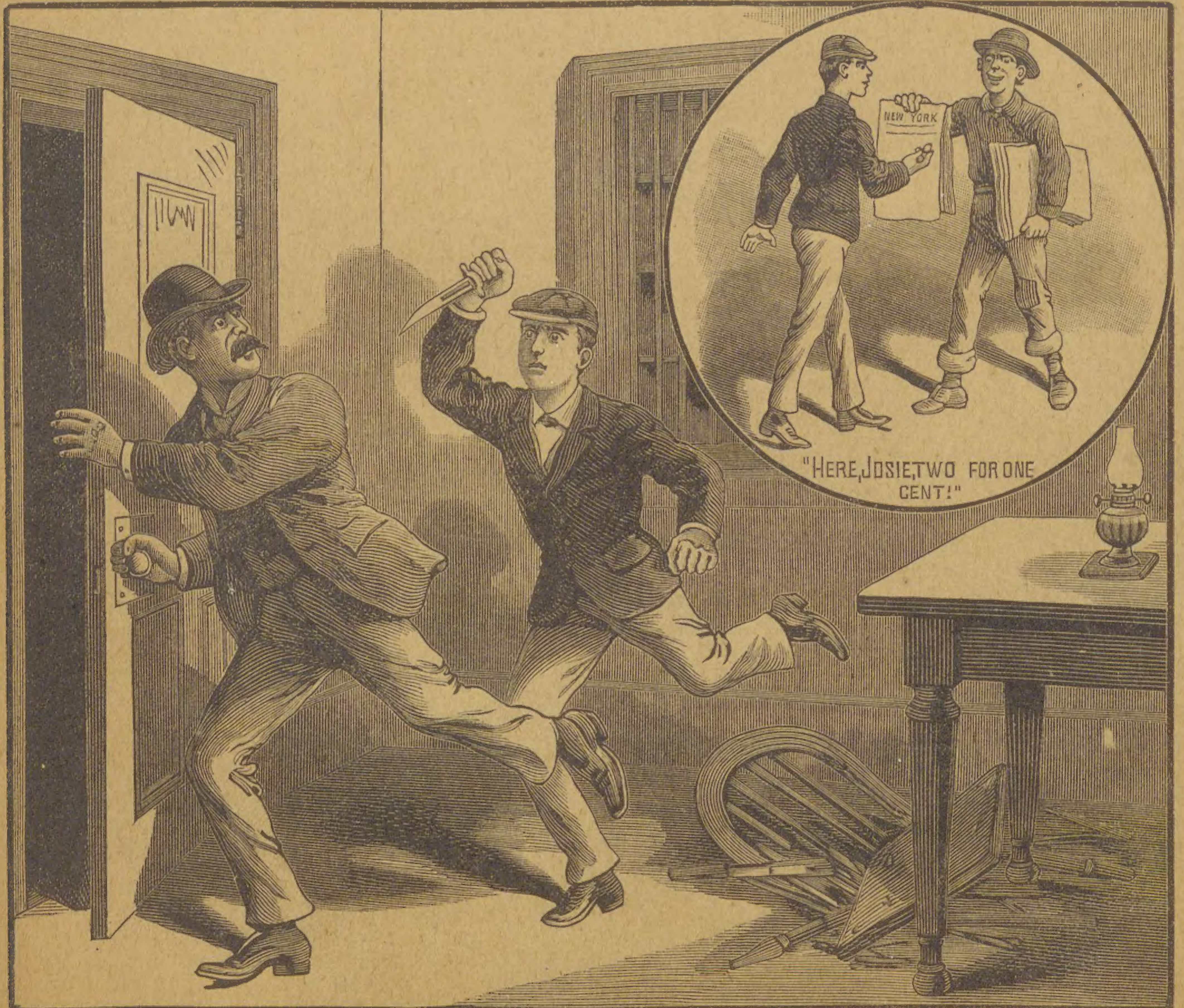
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HIS LAST CENT:

Or, HOW JOE DUTTON MADE
HIS FORTUNE.

BY H. K. SHACKLEFORD.



A yell escaped the man as he felt the blade go through his thigh, and another as Joe drew it out in such a way as to cut a terrible gash. Quick as a flash Joe gave him another stab in the calf of the other leg, almost hamstringing him. Without another blow the bully bounded out of the room with Joe right on his heels.

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HIS LAST CENT;

OR,

How Joe Dutton Made His Fortune

By H. K. SHACKLEFORD,

Author of *His First Drink; or, A Country Boy's in Life* New York," etc., etc., etc.

CHAPTER I.

THE WIDOW AND HER SON—HIS LAST CENT AND WHAT HE DID WITH IT.

"JOSEPH, my son, the last penny of the funeral expenses of your poor father has been paid, but we haven't a cent left in the house."

"Not a cent, mother?"

"No, Joseph, not a cent. We have food enough in the cupboard for breakfast. The rent is not due for a fortnight yet, so we shall have a place to sleep till that time. After that the good Lord only knows what will become of us."

"Well, don't cry, mother. *I'll take care of you.*"

"*You take care of me! Why, you are but a child.*"

"Mother, I am a great big boy. I am nearly fifteen years old now, and I am going to take care of my dear little mother, now that my good father is dead and buried. Don't cry, mother, please don't; just think how hard I will work to take care of you."

"My poor boy," sobbed the pale little mother, pressing him to her heart. "You might run around New York a month before you could find any work to do, and we have but one scant meal in the house."

"I won't wait for somebody to hire me," replied the boy. "I'll just pitch in and work like a beaver for myself. Oh, see here, mother! I have one penny in my pocket. My last cent! I'll go to work on that in the morning."

"One penny, one penny!" moaned the poor widow, shaking her head. "Alas, we shall starve, my poor boy. What can you do with one penny in the struggle for life in a great city like this."

"Wait and see, mother, wait and see," and the buoyant spirits of the lad began to cheer up his mother.

Mrs. Dutton was a pale-faced and good-looking little woman of some thirty-five years of age, who had buried a devoted husband a few weeks previous to the opening of our story.

She had one child, a son, named Joe, whom she had kept at school up to the time his father died. While her husband had been a good provider for his little family, he had not been able to save up anything for a "rainy day." Hence, when his burial expenses were paid, the widow and orphan had nothing left but a few household effects, which could not be pawned or sold, because they could not do without them.

Joe Dutton was a brave, truthful lad, who dearly loved his pale-faced little mother. His whole soul rose up in her defense, when he saw her tears, and heard her say that she hadn't a cent in the house after paying the last installment of his father's burial expenses, and he vowed that he would take care of her at all hazards.

He felt like a little man when he made that vow, and when he went to bed that night, after tenderly kissing her, he lay awake a long time trying to think what he would do the next morning to take care of his mother.

"I've got a penny," he said to himself. "I'll get up at daylight

and go down to the printing offices and buy a penny paper—they sell two for a penny—I'll buy two, and when I sell them I'll buy four, and then eight, and then sixteen. Whew! I'll make poor dear mother stare when I come home with my pocket full of pennies! I know Jimmy Scott. He sells papers and makes money, too, though he goes so dirty and talks such horrid slang. Yes, I'll see him down there, and I'll give him the penny and get him to buy me the two papers."

The next morning at the first streak of dawn Joe sprang out of bed, hurriedly dressed himself and slipped out of the rooms, crept downstairs and hurried off toward Printing House Square.

When almost there he overtook Jimmy Scott, the new sboy.

"Hallo, Jimmy!" he called.

Jimmy looked around quickly, and seeing him, sung out:

"Hello, Josie! Does yer mother know you're out?"

"No, she doesn't," was the frank reply.

Jimmy looked hard at him for a moment or two, and said:

"Skippin', eh?"

"No. I'm going after papers."

Jimmy opened his eyes.

He had never known Joe to sell papers, or do anything but go to school.

Joe was a brave lad, and he thought he knew Jimmy pretty well, so he took hold of his arm as he walked along the street, and said to him:

"Jimmy, you know my father died last month."

"Yes," and Jimmy wondered what was coming next.

"Well, we haven't anything to live on, and last night mamma cried and told me that we had no money or food in the house and——"

"Gosh!" gasped Jimmy, looking at the good clothes Joe then had on.

"I told her," continued Joe, not noticing his ejaculation, "that I would take care of her."

"Good! Bully for you!"

"So I've come out to buy papers and sell 'em, though I never sold one in my life."

"No, so yer didn't."

"But I haven't got but one penny, Jimmy—the last I have in the world," and a great lump crept up in his throat which seemed to choke off further utterance. "Won't you get me two penny papers with it, so I can get a start?"

"Yes, by gosh!" said Jimmy, brushing a tear away with the back of his hand, "an' as many as you wants."

"The penny won't buy but two, you know; there it is," and he gave Jimmy the penny, on which somebody had stamped the letter "P" with a die.

Jimmy took the penny and went into the office with a half hundred other news-boys to make his purchase.

In a few minutes he returned and gave Joe the two papers, saying: "Dere yer are. Now whoop 'em up!" and then he began to cry his papers.

Joe felt bashful at first, but soon saw that the other boys were too busy to take any notice of him. He also thought of his pale-faced little mother, whom he had left sleeping at home, and was nerved to dash up to the first early comer he saw and offer him a paper.

"Paper, sir?" he said, very politely.

"Yes," said the man, quickly handing him a cent, taking the paper and passing on.

That encouraged him.

Two more passed him without noticing him, and the third took his remaining paper.

Jimmy Scott had kept his eye on him, and when he saw Joe look around and start toward the printing office for more he sang out to him:

"Here, Josey, two for a cent, and he shook four papers at him.

Joe took the four papers and gave him the two cents.

In five minutes he had sold three of the four papers.

Then came a lull—then a rush, and in a few minutes more he rushed to the printing office and bought eight more papers, with which he rushed back to the street.

His pale face was now flushed.

He was full of energy and enthusiasm, and the thought that he would make his little pale-faced mother smile through her tears when he went home made him feel like tackling every man he met, rebuff or no rebuff.

In less than half an hour he had sold his eight papers and purchased sixteen more.

Not for a moment did he let up, and as the stream of people increased he sold faster and faster. His neat dress and quiet deportment caused many to stop and buy of him who would not have stopped for a dirty urchin.

Soon he went back and purchased thirty-two papers, which gave him quite an armful to carry.

Jimmy Scott came running by on his way to the office, and Joe hailed him.

Jimmy stopped and stared at him in amazement.

"Gosh!" he exclaimed. "You beat ole Vanderbilt, Josey!" and then he dashed away as fast as his heels could carry him.

In a few minutes he saw Jimmy coming back with half a hundred papers under his arm.

"Look out yer don't get stuck on 'em, Josey," said Jimmy, and then he was gone.

"What does he mean by getting stuck on them?" Joe asked himself. "Ah! He means that I ought not to buy too many at a time. I never thought of that. I'll look out for that."

When he sold the thirty-two papers he had thirty-two cents in his pocket.

"I'll buy just twenty papers this time," he said, "and keep twenty-two cents in my pocket," and he did so.

He was quite awhile selling them, but got rid of the last one after awhile.

"Now I've got fifty-two cents," he said, "and I'm as hungry as a wolf. I'll go home and let mamma know where I have been. I wonder if she has worried about me."

He hurried home, and when he was running up the stairs his mother opened the door, which led into her three little rooms, and ran out into the corridor, her sweet pale face whiter than ever.

"Oh, Joseph!" she exclaimed. "Where have you been all this time?"

Joe ran up to her, threw his arms around her neck and kissed her.

"Don't be mad with me, mamma," he said, "but I've been selling the morning papers."

"Why you didn't have but one penny!" she exclaimed, as they re-entered their rooms.

"I know that, mother, but that bought two papers, and as fast as I sold out I bought more, till I sold fifty-two papers. Just look at the pennies I've got," and he emptied his pocket into her lap as he spoke.

A glad, happy light came into her eyes, a smile played around her mouth, and the next moment she caught him in her arms, and pressing him to her heart, exclaimed:

"God bless you, my boy! You have lifted a great load off your mother's heart. I'll get work too, and help you all I can, so as not to be a burthen to you."

"No—no—little mamma!" he cried. "Don't you work. You are not strong enough. Just wait till I get my hand in and I'll make enough for us both. I'm hungry as a wolf."

"I have saved your breakfast for you," and she took the handful of pennies out of her lap, laid them on the table, and proceeded to get his breakfast for him.

Mrs. Dutton looked at him as he ate his breakfast, and thought she had never loved him so much as then; and Joe was as happy as any boy could be after what he had done.

He felt that he was no longer a boy, but a young man who had a responsibility which had to be met, and met bravely.

Mrs. Dutton counted the pennies and found fifty-two of them in the pile on the table.

"How much shall I take out of this pile, Joseph?" she asked.

"Take out forty cents, mamma," he said. "That will leave me enough to buy papers with in the afternoon."

She counted out forty cents and placed twelve cents by the side of his plate, which he put into his pocket soon after.

The meal over Joe put on his hat and left the house, to go down to the City Hall square to see Jimmy Scott and get from him all the points he could as to what he should do whilst waiting for the afternoon papers to come out.

He found Jimmy pitching pennies with a number of other newsboys.

"Hello, Josey!" called Jimmy, as he came up. "What luck wid yer papers?"

"First rate—sold fifty-two."

"Bully!" exclaimed Jimmy. "Try yer luck pitchin' pennies?"

"I don't care to do that. I might lose, and I've got no money to lose, you know."

"Ain't got no money an' sold fifty-two papers this morning?" exclaimed "Pug" Martin, a pugnosed, freckled face youth about Joe's age. "Whatcher givin' us? None o' yer snide chaff hyer."

"I said I have no money to lose, and I haven't," said Joe, with some spirit.

"Oh, yer only wants ter play when yer kin win, eh? Don't want nobody else ter win, eh? Bah! Yer're snide, yer is!" and the contemptuous look on "Pug's" face would have made a stoic laugh.

Joe was a New York boy, and was not disposed to be snubbed that way without resenting it, as he knew that if he did not show a proper spirit, every little newsboy around the City Hall square would be nagging him before the day was out.

Boys hate a coward as much as grown people do, and no boy knew that better than Joe did.

"Look here," said Joe, stepping up to "Pug's" side. "Just take that back or I'll drive your pug nose clear through your head."

"Drive away," said "Pug," who was what the boys called a "tarrier."

Joe blazed away straight from his shoulder and landed one on "Pug's" nose, and the claret flew.

"Pug" was dazed for a moment or two, and hardly knew which way to turn.

Whack! came another blow under his right eye.

Then with a yell "Pug" pitched in, and in a trice they were hammering each other like a couple of gold beaters.

But having given him two good good blows straight from the shoulder Joe had the advantage, and in just two minutes "Pug" was used up.

He saw that he had waked up the wrong passenger—caught a Tartar. No sooner was he sure of his mistake than he drew away and began nursing his nose, from which the claret streamed down over his clothes.

"Bully for yer, Josey!" cried Jimmy Scott, grasping his hand, "yer'er a trump. 'Pug' is no good."

From that moment every boy on the square was his friend.

They had long stood in fear of "Pug" Martin, because he was always ready with his fist to give some of them a blow. But now he had been knocked out by the most genteel-looking of all the newsboys on the street.

CHAPTER II.

JOE MEETS A FRIEND OF THE PICK-POCKET AND LEARNS SOMETHING.

As soon as the afternoon papers were out Joe Dutton bought two dozen of them and worked like a beaver till he got rid of them. Then he bought more, and worked harder still till they were gone.

Jimmy Scott was amazed at the energy he displayed and the success he met with, for he had sold eighty papers ere the sales slacked up, and still had one left.

"I'll take this one home for little mamma to read," he said, folding it up carefully and stowing it away in his pocket and starting for home, Jimmy Scott going along with him.

Down in Chatham Square they met "Pug" Martin and a friend—a bootblack.

"Say, cully!" called "Pug" to Joe, "I ain't done wid yer yet!" and with that he made a pass at Joe's nose.

Joe quickly parried the blow, and got in a stiff one on "Pug's" good eye, which sent him spinning.

Then the bootblack sailed in and Jimmy Scott sung out:

"Get back dere, Shiny."

But Shiny didn't get back, and Jimmy went for him.

Jimmy was a young wildcat.

He was all over the bootblack in just one second, pulling hair, scratching and biting.

"Take him off—ough!" yelled the bootblack, as he and Jimmy rolled over on the ground.

Suddenly an officer appeared on the scene.

"Skip, Josey! cops!" cried Jimmy, taking to his heels.

Joe, having a holy horror of being arrested, hastened after him with all his speed.

"Pug" and the bootblack were caught and carried into the station-house where they were locked up.

The scare which he received lasted Joe all the way home; but he said nothing to his mother about it for fear of making her feel badly. So far he had not received a scratch, and his mother would not have occasion to ask him any questions about the trouble.

"Just see here, mamma," he said, producing the pennies and throwing them into her lap. "My twelve cents has grown into eighty."

"Eighty cents!" she exclaimed. "Why, that's one dollar and twenty cents you have made to-day."

"Yes, mamma, and all off of one penny, too," he proudly remarked.

"But can you do that every day?" she asked.

"I don't know. I suppose so."

"When it rains you can't sell papers on the street, you know."

"That's so—I never thought of that."

"So, you see, we'll have to be very saving, in order to look out for rainy days. I have spent but twenty cents of the forty, but that bought enough for both of us to-night, which leaves us one dollar. I am going out to-morrow and see if I can get something to do."

Joe took twenty cents of the money with which to buy papers the next morning, and retired to bed very early.

He was up early the next morning and off for the newspaper offices. Jimmy Scott gave him a tip as to which papers paid the best, and he invested accordingly.

He had not been selling more than a half hour when a fight between two men drew a big crowd near the post office.

Joe was on the outside of the crowd watching for a chance to sell a paper.

As he was running around the crowd he saw a pickpocket relieve a well-dressed man of a fine gold watch, and go round to the other side.

Joe caught the man's coat-sleeve and said to him:

"Your watch is gone. I saw a man take it."

The merchant felt for his watch and found that it was gone.

"Where's the thief?" he gasped.

"Come—I'll show him to you," said Joe, and leading the way round to the other side of the crowd he pointed him out to the merchant.

The thief was in the act of going through another man when the irate merchant grabbed him by the collar.

"You thieving sneak!" hissed the merchant, shaking him till his teeth rattled. "I'll show you how to pick pockets," and with that he hurled him to the ground and thumped him till he yelled:

"Take 'im off! Murder!"

"Yes, I'll murder you! Where's my watch and chain?" and he gave him some whacks which knocked grunts out of him which were heard above the din of the street.

In the struggle the watch fell out of the thief's pocket, and Joe picked it up. A policeman coming up arrested the thief and took him to the Tombs, whither went Joe and the merchant to bear witness against him.

"Now my lad," said the merchant, "you saved me a very fine watch. Here's some of the stuff it is made of. So your name is Joseph Dutton, is it?"

"Yes, sir," replied Joe, taking the gold coin, which proved to be of the denomination of five dollars.

"Where do you live?"

"No. — Broome street, sir."

"And you sell newspapers, do you?"

"Yes, sir."

"Well, bring the Times and Herald to my store every morning at this time. There's my card," and he gave him a card bearing the name of

"JAMES MALLORY,
"Commission Merchant,
"No. — Broadway."

Whilst Joe was reading the card the merchant disappeared in the crowd, and Joe, scarcely knowing whether he was awake or not, went on selling his papers.

"How much did he tip you, Joe?" Jimmy Scott asked.

"Five dollars, Jimmy."

"Gewhillikins!" and Jimmy let out a prolonged whistle expressive of his astonishment. Then he asked:

"Whatcher goin' ter do wid all that wealth, Joe?"

"Going to give it to my mother to pay rent with, Jimmy."

Jimmy's countenance fell.

"Den yer can't have no fun wid it, eh?"

"Oh, yes, I can."

"What fun?"

"Have the fun of living in a house instead of on the side-walk," was the reply.

Jimmy whistled again.

"Yer won't have tu live on no sidewalk, Joe," he remarked.

"No, because I'll pay the rent."

"Level head," said Jimmy, as he went off after a customer across the street.

Joe went on selling his papers as fast as he could, whilst Jimmy told the newsboys about the good luck which had come to him.

When business slacked up the boys crowded around Joe to see the boy who had five dollars in gold in his pocket. Joe would not produce it. He was cautious enough to keep it in his pocket.

On going home to his breakfast he gave his mother the five dollar gold piece, and asked:

"Do you know what that is?"

She looked at it a moment, and exclaimed:

"Five dollars! Where in the world did you get it?"

He told her the story, and she threw her arms around his neck and kissed him, her eyes full of tears of joy.

"So you see how it pays to be honest and industrious," she said.

"Oh, I'm more proud of you than ever in your life before."

"I'll always do right, mamma," he said.

"I hope you will. Oh, my son, if you should ever do a wrong act I'd die with a broken heart."

"Don't worry, mamma," he said, tenderly. "I'll be an honest man if I never wear anything but patches and rags."

"I know you will. You had an honest father, and you are his image."

"We'll soon have money enough to pay the rent now," he said.

"Yes. How many papers did you sell to-day?"

"Oh, I forgot. I made sixty-three cents this morning. There's forty; I'll keep the twenty-three."

Mrs. Dutton put away every cent save the few she spent for food, and she brought all her knowledge of housekeeping and marketing to bear in order to make a cent buy its full value.

In the afternoon Joe worked hard selling the evening papers, and met with his usual success.

He had now drifted into the swim of the newsboy's life and ways, and lost a good deal of the reserve which characterized him when he first went at it.

He enjoyed the excitement of the life at first, but when the idle hours came, between ten o'clock in the morning and three in the afternoon, time hung heavy on his hands. There were but few papers sold between those hours, and Joe set himself thinking how he could manage to make those hours profitable to himself.

He thought of the boot-blackening business, and watched one of the bootblacks to see how much he earned between those hours.

Some of them were not satisfactory, as they did very little business, and so he decided that something else would suit him better. But what that something else was he did not know.

"Jimmy," he said to young Scott, as they were going back home that evening, "let's find something to do between ten and three o'clock."

"Gosh!" exclaimed Jimmy, "don't yer think of nothin' else but making money?"

"Oh, yes, but that's just what I am thinking of now. We have five hours of idle time on our hands every day, in which we don't make but a few pennies."

"Yes," gravely assented Jimmy. "But we didn't make the time."

"Of course not, but we can improve it."

"Gosh!" ejaculated Jimmy. "Ye're gittin' it down fine, Josey."

"I've got to, Jimmy. I've got a landlord to pay and you haven't. There's the difference. Then my mother and myself have to live."

"Yes," and Jimmy began to think that Joe Dutton was a man already paying house-rent and supporting his mother.

"Well, what can we do to make money between ten and three o'clock?"

"Hanged if I know less'n we pitch pennies."

"But somebody must lose if we do that, and we may lose as often as we win."

"Yes," and Jimmy kept on thinking about the matter. He had lost eleven cents pitching pennies that day, and could realize the force of what Joe had just remarked.

"Kin yer black boots?" he finally asked Joe.

"I've never blacked any but my own shoes," was the reply, "but I don't like the business. There's too many Italians in it."

"Dat's so, cully," assented Jimmy. "Blowed ef I know what tu do."

"Well, think about it, and let me know in the morning if you have found anything that will pay."

Thus they parted, and when they met the next morning Jimmy said he had lain awake thinking about it, and finally gave it up as a bad job.

Whilst he was selling his papers that morning a man whistled to him and motioned for a paper.

Three newsboys darted forward to supply his wants, but he would buy of none but Joe, to whom he said:

"Your name is Joe Dutton, is it not?"

"Yes, sir," he replied.

"You had a hand in catching a pick-pocket the other day, didn't you?"

"Yes, sir."

"I saw your name in the papers. You were the cause of a good fellow being jugged."

"He was a thief, sir," said Joe. "I saw him take the watch out of Mr. Mallory's pocket."

"Maybe you did. It was steal or starve with him. He is an honest man, as you are an honest boy, but when starvation was staring him in the face he had to steal, just as you would steal to give your mother bread to eat."

"Does he support his mother?"

"Yes, and his three little sisters, one of whom is nothing but a baby. I know him well. If you can manage to keep away from the Grand Jury room, or the trial, it will be twenty dollars in your pocket. Just think of that. Twenty dollars is more money than you can make in a month selling papers."

Joe was bewildered.

He didn't know what to say.

He didn't understand exactly why he should be paid so much money or not attending the trial of the pick-pocket.

"Is it wrong, sir?" he asked.

"What wrong?"

"To take your money for that?"

"Of course not. I'll explain it to you. You see, you saw him prig that watch?"

"Yes, so I did."

"Well, if you go to his trial and swear to that, he will be sent up the river for seven years. Just think of that."

"Well, wouldn't that be right?" Joe asked.

"No, not for priggging a watch to buy bread for his poor mother. If you keep away you won't have told any lies, and nobody will be harmed. Mr. Mallory has got his watch back and no harm is done, and you'll have twenty dollars in your pocket. Just think of that."

Joe did think of that, and said:

"I'll ask my mother about it and see what she says."

"You don't want to ask anybody about it. Just keep your mouth shut and keep out of the way. I've got the money ready for you right here in my pocket. He is a friend of mine, and I want to get him out of this scrape if I can. Do you understand?"

"Yes, sir."

"Well, here's the money," and he thrust the money into Joe's hand, saying:

"Just keep away from the city hall and court-house. Sell your papers somewhere else, and you'll be all right."

Before Joe could make any reply the man was gone.

Joe thrust the bill into his pocket ere the boys could see it, and went on selling his papers.

But he couldn't help thinking that something was wrong about it, and his mother's words that if he committed a wrong act it would break her heart kept ringing in his ears.

"I'll find out if it's wrong," he finally said to himself. "I'll go to Mr. Mallory and tell him about it. He'll know what to do, and will tell me."

He hurried home, ate his breakfast, gave his mother seventy cents which he had earned that morning, and then hastened down-town to Mr. Mallory's store.

The merchant was in and greeted him pleasantly with:

"Well, what can I do for you, my lad?"

"I want to see you, sir."

"Well, come into my office here," and he led the way into his private office and closed the door.

"What is it now?"

"A man came to me this morning and said that I must keep away from the trial of that pick-pocket who got your watch the other day, and gave me twenty dollars to do so. I don't know what to do. Here's the money. Please tell me what I ought to do, as I don't want to do anything that is not right."

Mr. Mallory was astonished and asked:

"Who was the man?"

"I don't know, sir. I never saw him before."

"Well, you keep your eyes open for him. Leave the money here with me, and here is five dollars for you from me. When you see him again spot him and let me know at once if you can."

"Was it wrong for me to take the money, sir?"

"It would have been very wrong for you to have done what he wanted you to do, which was simply to defeat the ends of justice, and keep a notorious thief out of jail."

Joe was thunderstruck.

He was glad he came to see the merchant, and said so.

"Yes. I am glad, too, my lad," remarked Mr. Mallory. "You will find in the end that it pays to be honest and straightforward. That man committed an act for which he can be sent to State prison. You would have done the same thing had you complied with his wishes. As it is, you have done no wrong. Just keep straight on doing right, and you'll have reason to be proud of your character and record."

Joe shook hands with him and left the store, leaving the twenty-dollar bill behind him, and with another five dollars of Mr. Mallory's honest money in his pocket.

CHAPTER III.

SEIZED AND CAGED.

JOE did not return home till after he had sold the evening papers, and then he went to his supper with a good appetite.

He was feeling good over having gotten out of a scrape by going to Mr. Mallory for advice.

That evening he gave his money to his mother and told her the whole story.

She was greatly astonished, and said:

"I am so glad you went to Mr. Mallory. He ought to know the law, and I don't believe he would advise you to do wrong."

"Oh, I know he wouldn't, mamma," said he. "He took the bill, and told me to leave it with him, and gave me five dollars for myself. He told me that it paid to be honest, and said he believed I was an honest boy?"

"Ah! He was right, my son."

Joe slept soundly that night, and the next morning was up bright and early and off for his papers.

He was selling his papers right and left when the friend of the pick-pocket came along and bought one.

"Why don't you go up town and sell your papers?" he asked of Joe. "The court officers will soon drop on you and yank you in to swear against my friend."

"Oh, they haven't got me yet," said Joe, selling a paper to a passer-by.

"But you don't want to run any risks, understand?"

"I know what I am doing," said Joe.

"So do I," hissed the man, leaning over so as to let no one else hear, "and if you get caught and appear on the witness stand against my friend I'll cut your liver out of you!" and with that he turned away and walked over across the City Hall square.

Joe gazed after him with a pale face but blazing eyes.

"You can't scare me," he said. "I'll see if I haven't got a grip on you, though, which will take some of that stiffening out of you."

"Who is der bloke, Josey?" Jimmy Scott asked.

"I don't know his name," was the reply.

"He spoke to you like he was madder'n a hornet."

Joe made no reply.

He did not care to take any of the boys into his confidence in the matter, satisfied that Mr. Mallory was his best counselor, next to his mother.

During the day he managed to see Mr. Mallory and tell him what the man had threatened.

"Here he comes now," said he, as he saw the pick-pocket's friend coming toward them. "I'm only selling you a paper," and Joe gave him a paper, for which the merchant paid him.

As the man came up, Mr. Mallory got a good look at him, and saw that he was probably one of the light-fingered gentry himself. He passed on, however, as if he had taken no notice of him.

"Have you said anything to him?" the man asked, coming up to Joe after the merchant had passed.

"What do you take me for?" Joe asked. "Do you think I'm an idiot?"

"From the way you hang around here right under the noses of all the court officers I should think you are at least a half idiot."

"Oh, you make me tired!" exclaimed Joe, turning to offer a paper to a passer-by.

"See here, my fine kid," hissed the man in his face, "I'll give you something to think about. If you appear as a witness against my friend your life won't be worth two cents. We have to protect ourselves some way, so look out," and the villain then turned and walked away, leaving Joe to think over what he had said to him.

Joe did not seem to bother about what he had heard, but went on selling his papers as fast as he could.

He had now become very expert at selling papers, and sold more than any other boy of his age on the street.

A policeman saw the man talking to Joe in a half confidential way and then walk off. It attracted his attention, and he stepped up to Joe, and asked:

"Do you know that man who was talking to you just now?"

"Which one?" Joe asked.

"The last one who spoke to you."

"Oh! No, I don't know his name. He spoke to me yesterday."

"What was he saying to you just now?" the officer asked.

Joe hesitated.

"I know the man," added the officer. "He is a crook."

"Is he?" Joe asked, quite astonished to have his suspicions confirmed.

"Yes—I am watching him."

"Well, you know I caused a pick-pocket to be arrested the other day for picking Mr. Mallory's pocket, and——"

"Oh, you are the boy who did that, are you?" the officer interrupted.

"Yes. Mr. Mallory had me go to the Tombs with him and swear to seeing the man take the watch from his pocket. This man says he is his friend, and that if I appeared against him at the trial my life would not be worth two cents."

"Did he say that?" the officer asked.

"He did."

"You will swear to it?"

"Yes, sir."

"Then I'll pull him in," and he made straight across over to Broadway, and found him standing on a corner over there viewing the passers by with the air of one at peace with all the world.

"I want you, Jakey," said the officer, laying a hand on his shoulder.

"What's the matter now?" the pick-pocket demanded.

"You're wanted. Come on," and he led him to the Tombs and had him locked up.

Then he hunted up Joe Dutton, whom he soon found selling papers over near the post office.

"You must be at the Tombs at 9 o'clock in the morning to tell the judge about the threat he made against you."

"Very well. I'll be there," replied Joe. "I'll be there."

He hastened to see Mr. Mallory and found him in.

"He's arrested, sir," said Joe, in no little excitement of manner.

"Who is arrested?" the merchant asked.

"The man who gave me that twenty dollars the other day."

"Oh, yes. Well, I expected to hear something of that kind very soon. What's he arrested for now?"

"For threatening to kill me if I appeared against the pick-pocket. The officer told me to appear at the Tombs to-morrow morning at nine o'clock, and I want to know if I must say anything about that twenty dollars."

"Well, I don't know. That would depend on circumstances. I'll send for my lawyer and let him meet you there and tell you what to do. That would be the best way. Don't let 'em frighten you. They can't do anything more than talk big and that's all."

That was enough for Joe.

He knew that if there was a lawyer there to look after him he could not go wrong, and he went away satisfied after thanking the merchant.

That evening Joe was just about to retire to bed, when a rap on the door of their humble apartments startled him and his mother.

Joe opened the door, and a very pleasant-faced young man stood there, hat in hand, who asked:

"Does Mrs. Dutton live here?"

"Yes," said Joe. "Will you step in? Mother is in the next room."

"No, thanks," said the young man, "I haven't time. I want to see Joseph Dutton, Mrs. Dutton's son. Is he in?"

"Yes, I am Joe Dutton," replied Joe, somewhat surprised.

"Here's a note for you. I am one of Mr. Mallory's clerks."

"Oh, come in, please!" exclaimed Joe, as he took the note which the young man gave him. "I am glad to see you," and the young man had to step inside and take a seat whilst Joe read the letter.

"Dear Joseph," it ran, "I send Mr. Echols, one of my clerks, to show you the way to my house. Come with him at once, as I wish to see you without delay. Your friend,

JAMES MALLORY."

"Why, yes. I'll go, of course," said Joe. "Mamma, Mr. Mallory has sent for me to go to his house. Here's his note. I'll be back just as soon as I can. Don't worry," and he hurriedly threw on his hat and coat, ran into the other room, kissed his mother, and then went out with Echols.

Out on the street the young man turned eastward and went toward the Bowery.

Crossing that thoroughfare he kept on eastward.

"Why, I thought he lived 'way up-town," exclaimed Joe, in no little surprise.

"So he does," replied Echols; "but the cars which take us within a block of his house do not run on the Bowery."

"Oh, yes! All right—go ahead!"

They turned into another street, went two blocks and then turned eastward again.

Ere they had gone two blocks two men rushed out of a dark alley and attacked both of them.

Echols fell as if knocked down, and one of the men seized Joe, clapped a hand over his mouth, lifted him off his feet and rushed back into the alley with him.

It was all done so quickly that Joe had little time to think.

But he fought with all his might, though without avail.

The man held his hand over his mouth with such force as to shut off his wind, and Joe thought it was his intention to end him that way then and there.

Nerved to desperation by the thought that the man was trying to murder him, he gave a sudden wrench and got a chance to get one breath of air.

Then the hand closed over his mouth again.

All this time the man was running through the dark alley with him.

Suddenly Joe got the man's thumb in his mouth, and he closed on it with the force of a 100 pound snapping turtle.

"Ough! Let go, blast you!" yelled the man.

But he didn't let go.

On the contrary, he held on like grim death, and the ruffian yelled again and gave him a blow on the side of the head which made him see a thousand stars.

That knocked him loose, and Joe started to run.

But the ruffian caught him again and began dragging him through the alley at a furious rate.

"Let me go!" cried Joe.

On he went, dragging him along with brute force.

The next moment Joe fastened his teeth in his arm just above the wrist.

"Ten thousand cats!" hissed the man, giving him a blow that knocked him senseless.

When he came to he found himself in a room with a ruffianly-looking man, lying on a rude bed.

The room was dirty and ill-smelling, the one window barred and the door a very strong one.

His head was ringing still from the blow the bully had given him, and his face on that side had swollen considerably.

"Where am I?" he asked, sitting upon the bed, and looking around the room.

"Why, yer're here, of course, cully," replied the bully.

"But what am I here for?"

"Don't you know?"

"No, I don't."

"Ha-ha-ha!" laughed the man. "Well, that's a good un!"

"What am I here for?" Joe asked again, looking uneasily at the man.

"Why yer've been arrested an' tried an' sent up," said the man, looking him full in the face.

Joe glared at him in dumfounded amazement for one or two minutes, then he asked:

"What was I sent up for?"

"For swindling a man out of twenty dollars."

"Oh!" and Joe then saw the lie at once.

"You understand now, eh?"

"Yes."

"Wal, whar's the money?"

"That's my business. Send the man here who gave it to me, and I'll tell him all about it."

The man chuckled.

"Yer're a spunky kid," he said, "but it won't save yer. I've got orders ter cut yer wind pipe ef yer don't give it up?"

"How can I give it up? I haven't got it with me."

"That's for yer ter decide yerself. I've got my orders an' I don't go back on 'em. Do yer see that?" and he drew a murderous-looking knife from under his coat and laid it on the little table in front of him.

Joe's blood almost froze in his veins as he gazed at the knife.

He had never seen such a terrifying weapon before in all his life.

"Do yer see it?"

"Yes."

"Wal, that's my little slicer, that is. It never misses, kid, an' ef yer is wise yer will think o' how tu get at them twenty dollars an' give 'em up. Then yer'll be all right."

Joe was silent.

He couldn't make up his mind whether the man was blowing or not.

But he said:

"I don't know how to get it unless I go after it."

"Of course not," sneered the bully, "yer take us for idgeots. We'd let yer go after it, wouldn't we? An' yer'd go an' git it an' come right straight back hyer an' give it to us, eh?"

Joe saw that the man took no stock in honesty and truthfulness in any one.

"Well, I don't know any other way to get it," he said, after awhile.

"Wal, maybe as how yer kin send for it," suggested the man.

"Who could I send?"

"Somebody, I guess."

"But who? The money is in the hands of Mr. Mallory."

"It is, eh?" and the bully sprang to his feet.

"Yes."

"An' yer played false, eh?" hissed the man.

"No. I never agreed to do anything he asked. He slipped the money into my hand and walked off. I didn't want it, and told him so."

"Yer didn't tell him that?"

"But I did."

"Yer didn't!"

"I *did*!" asserted Joe, with a spirited emphasis.

"But yer didn't tell him so the next time yer saw him. Yer had 'im jugged. Now he's got *you* jugged, an' he'll cut the liver outen yer for goin' back on him. He'll be out to-morrow, 'cause yer won't be thar ter swar agin him. Blast yer, yer've gin us more trouble than ther cops."

Joe made no reply.

He was in their power, and did not know what to do under the circumstances. His mother would be up all night waiting for him, and his long absence would give her no end of worry.

The thought of his mother nerved him to desperation.

The murderous-looking knife was lying on the little table.

Quick as the lightning's flash he sprang forward and seized it, crying out:

"I'll give you more trouble yet."

CHAPTER IV.

JOE MAKES A GALLANT FIGHT AND WINS.

HAD an earthquake suddenly brought the old house down on his head and shoulders, the bully could not have been more astonished than he was when he saw his terrible weapon in the hands of his young prisoner.

He glared at him for a moment or two, and then hissed in low, fierce tones:

"Drop it, Kid!"

"I won't!" was the reply.

"Drop it, or I'll kill yer!"

"Kill away," said Joe, determined to sell his life dearly if he had to sell it at all.

The bully seized the only chair in the room and raised it above his head.

Then he advanced upon the youth.

Quick as a flash Joe darted forward, to dive between his legs and give him a taste of the knife at the same time.

Down came the chair, smashing to pieces on the floor just as Joe went between his legs.

The keen blade of the knife also went clear through the fleshy part of his thigh at the same time.

A yell escaped the man as he felt the blade go through his thigh, and another as Joe drew it out in such a way as to cut a terrible gash.

Quick as a flash Joe gave him another stab in the calf of the other leg, almost ham stringing him.

Without another blow the bully bounded out of the room with Joe right on his heels.

Down the stairs, which were lighted by a dim lamp at the foot of the flight, they both ran, Joe following merely to get out of the house—the bully going to get away from the murderous knife.

Suddenly Joe found himself out of doors and in a sort of court.

A little way in front he saw the opening of an alley, and through that he darted, the ruffian having gone another way, as if to run around the house.

Ere he knew it Joe was out on the street at the very spot where he and Echols had been attacked.

He recognized the place in an instant and turned toward the Bowery, knowing that once in that great thoroughfare he would be safe from attack.

A short run brought him to the Bowery.

He still held the blood-stained knife in his hand.

There was also quite a quantity of blood on his clothes.

Closing the big knife, he hid it under his coat and hurried on toward his home, which was not very far off now.

In five minutes he was at home, climbing the stairs.

"Is it you, Joseph?" his mother asked from her bed-room.

"Yes, mamma," he replied, as calmly as possible. "I am sorry I kept you awake so long."

"Did you see Mr. Mallory?"

"Go to sleep, mamma, and I'll tell you all about it in the morning," he answered, and to escape further questioning he hurried to his room and shut the door.

Then he washed the blood stains from the knife as well as from his coat, to save his mother from a terrible shock in the morning.

He lay awake a long time ere he could sleep, for he had been through an adventure that had strained his nerves to their utmost tension.

In the morning he was up and out before his mother awoke, taking the knife with him.

He bought the usual number of papers, and had his usual luck in selling them.

But he did not go home to his breakfast at his usual hour, for he waited to see Mr. Mallory.

The merchant arrived at his store at his usual hour, and greeted Joe in his kindly way.

"Mr. Mallory," Joe asked, "did you send me a note last night to come to your house with one of your clerks named Echols?"

"No, I did not," was the quick reply.

"I thought so. A young man brought me a note with your name signed to it, and I went with him. On the way we were attacked, knocked down and used up generally. When I came to I was a prisoner in a room with a big ruffian. I snatched his knife and cut him, and that's how I got away. There's the knife," and he laid the terrible weapon on the table in front of the merchant.

Mr. Mallory was amazed.

He had read of such things, but this was the first time in his life that he had realized the truth of their existence.

"Joseph," he said, "tell me the whole story—but wait a moment, I'll send up for a detective and you had better tell the whole story to him."

He sent a messenger at once for a detective, and when one came he was given the story.

"Why bless my soul!" exclaimed the detective. "There is a reward of one thousand dollars out for that man—the one you cut."

"Then you can find him somewhere up there, for the blood was pouring from him as he ran last night."

"Then come on; go with me," said the detective, springing up. "I'll nab him if you can put me on the trail."

Joe put on his hat to go with the detective.

"Mr. Mallory," said the detective, "tell your lawyer to have the case at the Tombs put off till to-morrow morning on account of the absence of this witness."

"Very well," replied the merchant.

Joe and the detective lost no time in getting back to the spot where the seizure took place the night before.

Joe boldly led the way into the rear court.

There he plainly saw where the trail of blood had been washed up with water and broom.

The detective at once followed it with the unerring instinct of a bloodhound, as it led into a side door on the other end of the house.

The door was locked, but he managed to use force enough to open it without breaking anything, and then started up the rickety stairs, on which the trail of blood was plainly visible.

"Come on, Joe," said the detective, as he ran up.

At the head of the stairs a brawny woman met them, with an ax in her hands.

"What d'ye want?" she demanded of the detective.

"I want Dick Olsen," was the reply of the detective, showing his shield and drawing his revolver at the same time.

"You can't have 'im!" she exclaimed, raising the ax above her head. "Go back now or I'll brain ye!"

"You know very well that I *will* have 'im, Meg," he said, raising his revolver and aiming at her head. "Drop that ax now and behave yourself, if you want to be let alone yourself."

She was irresolute for a moment or two, and the detective began to count:

"One—two—"

Down dropped the ax and the detective darted by her, with Joe at his heels.

But she reached out and caught Joe, grabbing him fiercely by the collar and trying to choke him.

Quick as a flash Joe bit a piece out of her arm.

She yelled like a Comanche Indian, and went at the youth with all the fury of a tigress. Joe was getting the worst of it decidedly, when the detective ran back and seized her.

"You vicious old hag!" he exclaimed, "I'll teach you a lesson you won't forget!" and ere she was aware of it she was handcuffed.

"Now come on, Joe!" he said, "and let her admire her jewelry."

Joe went with him, leaving her at the head of the stairs, making the house ring with her savage abuse.

Following the trail of blood up another flight of stairs they came to the door where it ended.

The detective knocked on it and a bullet crashed through the panel in response.

"Oh!" groaned the detective. "I'm shot! I'm done for!" and he made a noise with his feet like one falling to the floor.

The door opened, and a man appeared with a smoking pistol in his hand.

"Quick as an electric flash the detective clapped the muzzle of his revolver to his head, saying:

"I've got the drop on you!"

The man seemed utterly paralyzed.

His weapon fell from his nerveless grasp and rattled on the floor.

"Pick it up, Joe," said the detective, "and use it if necessary."

Joe quickly obeyed and in a moment he held the weapon in his hand.

"Hold out your hands."

The man held them out without a word, and the bracelets were slipped on them.

"Now, sit down there in that corner, and stay there till I want you."

The prisoner did so.

Turning to a bed on the floor of the next corner, he saw a man lying, looking pale and wild-eyed.

"So I have caught you at last, Dick Olsen," he remarked.

"Yes, but what good will it do yer?" growled the man. "I'm done for. Ther kid did ther business for me."

"Well, I hope not. I'll send for an ambulance and have your hurts looked after."

"It's no use, cap'en," was the reply. "The kid butcher has done for me."

"Well, we'll see. Joe, you must run to the policeman on the corner at the Bowery and give him this note from me," and the detective hastily wrote a few lines on a piece of paper and gave it to the lad. "If any one tries to stop you, use that revolver you have in your hand. It's no time to dally with thieves now."

Joe took the note and rushed down the stairs.

A crowd of vicious-looking men and women were in the court below.

"Clear the way there, now!" he exclaimed, flourishing the revolver. They gave way like sheep before a huge wolf.

Every one of them knew he was the lad who had used the knife on Dick Olsen, the burglar and murderer, with such terrible effect. They did not care to provoke him to pull the trigger of that weapon on any of them.

Thus he was enabled to get out to the street, and there he took to his heels and ran like a turkey till he struck the Bowery.

The policeman was not in sight, but he soon found him, and gave him the note.

Reading it the officer started, exclaiming:

"Got him at last!"

He rattled his club and blew his whistle.

Two others appeared.

"Call an ambulance to No. — on — street," he said to one of them, "and then come on there yourself."

Then two of them hastened back with Joe.

A larger crowd had gathered there; but when the officers appeared a number of them slunk away out of sight, as if they did not care to have the police see them.

In a few minutes one of the officers was up stairs with the detective, whilst the other remained at the door below to keep order there and see who went in and out of the building.

By and by the ambulance came and the wounded man, Dick Olsen, was brought down and placed in it. The woman Meg, who passed as Dick's wife, was escorted to the station by one officer, and the man who shot at the detective through the panel of the door, was taken in charge by another.

"Now come on, Joe," said the detective. "This is your victory and you shall have all the honors."

"He's a young tiger!" cried one. "Just look at 'im!"

"He's rank pisen," said another.

"A reglar wild cat," put in a third.

"Those are fine compliments, Joe," remarked the detective, leading the way to the street.

"I don't care for 'em, sir," said Joe.

"I suppose not—not at your age. You would appreciate them ten years from now, I guess."

They soon arrived at the station, and the two prisoners were locked up in cells.

But the wounded man was sent to the hospital with an officer to watch over him.

The chief of police sent for Joe and complimented him on what he had done, saying:

"You are an honest lad, just keep up that name and you will have one that you will be proud of when you grow up. I will see that you get the reward which has been standing for nearly a year for Dick Olsen. You cut him up pretty badly though."

"I had to do it, sir. He was going to kill me," replied Joe.

"Of course. You did perfectly right."

Joe remarked that he was very hungry, not having yet had his breakfast, and that now he would go and get something to eat.

"See here, my lad!" said the chief. "You are my prisoner till after you eat, so come and eat with me."

"All right," said Joe, "if you'll hurry up, for I am starving."

"Is that why you bit the woman so this morning?"

"No, sir. My teeth were all the weapons I had which could make any impression on her, and so I used them."

"Pretty tough, eh?"

"Yes, sir."

The chief led him out to a Broadway hotel and called for a dinner for two, such as Joe had never even dreamed of before."

"Now pitch in and fill up," said the jolly head of the police department, and he did not need to be told the second time. He was hungry, and he pitched in and ate like an old soldier.

CHAPTER V.

FORTUNE SMILES—THE LAST CENT AGAIN.

THE meal over the chief asked him what he was going to do now.

"I'm going to run down and get the evening papers and sell 'em," was the reply.

"How much do you make selling papers?"

"Some days I make one dollar and twenty-five cents, and on other days not more than a dollar, and even less than half that when it rains all day."

"Yes, the rain bothers the newsboys and boothblacks."

"Yes, sir, very much."

"Do you like selling papers?"

"I can't say that I do, sir. It was the only thing I could do to support my mother after my father died."

"Ah!" and the tears came into the eyes of the brave old chief as he looked at the lad who was fighting the battle of life for himself and his mother.

"I didn't have but one cent to start with," remarked Joe, "and on the first day I sold 120 papers. But it was hard work. I guess I can get along with selling papers till I can get something that will pay better."

"Yes—yes—you'll get along. But look here, Joe Dutton, I'm an old man now—old enough to be your grandfather—but let me say to you that if you ever see the time when you want a friend to stand by you, and I am above ground, call on me. Do you understand?"

"Yes, sir. And I am very thankful to you for your kind words."

"Well, that's all right. An honest boy or man will never lack friends. Don't forget that, my lad."

"I've heard my father say that many a time, sir."

"Ah! He was an honest man then. Well, good bye. I must go back to my office. When you get up this way again just drop in and say 'good morning, or evening' to me. I shall be very glad to see you."

"Yes, sir, I shall always be proud to have the chief of police speak to me."

"Ah, and claim him as your friend—yes—your friend. Don't forget that."

He shook hands with Joe, and strolled off toward his office, whilst Joe made his way down-town toward the newspaper offices.

When he got down to City Hall Square he heard some of the boys crying extras of the evening papers.

"Hyer's yer extree!" they yelled. "A newsboy's fight for life!"

"Hello, Jimmy!" he sung out to Jimmy Scott, who was bawling himself hoarse crying his papers, "you make too much fuss."

"Hello, Josey," called Jimmy, running up to him. "Gosh, Josey, yer're in de papers!"

"Eh? What?" gasped Joe, nearly paralyzed at the news.

Jimmy gave him a copy of the paper, and he saw over a column of a highly-colored narrative of his adventures. All the afternoon papers had it, and Joe suddenly found himself famous.

"Hyer he is, cullies!" cried Jimmy, and in less than ten minutes a score of boys were gathered around him, gazing at him with awe, because he had taken big Dick Olsen's knife and carved him up with it.

With the street gamin that was enough to make a hero for any body, and so Joe was their hero.

They almost worshiped him from that hour. Even the newsboy, who had twice tried to thrash him, came up and offered him his hand.

"Dere's my hand, Josey," he said. "I'm yer friend, an' don't yet forget it."

"I won't forget it, 'Pug,'" replied Joe. "You never had any just cause not to be my friend."

"That's so, Josey," replied 'Pug.' "I didn't know yer."

Joe didn't know whether to buy any papers and sell them or not. He didn't think he could cry the extras with good grace.

But when he remembered that his little pale-faced mother would expect him to bring home the usual profits of his afternoon's work, he pitched in and bought fifty copies and went to work.

Such was the demand that afternoon that he sold over 150 copies, and then went home with Jimmy Scott, who lived in the next block above him.

When he reached the door of his mother's apartments he found three women, who lived in the tenement, seated round the table with his mother.

Mrs. Dutton gave a scream of joy when she saw him, and ran to meet him, crying:

"Oh, my darling boy! You have been in such terrible danger, and didn't let me know a word about it! Oh, I ought to whip you, you naughty boy!" and she nearly smothered him with her kisses.

"I didn't want to have you worrying about me, mamma," he replied. "How did you find it out?"

"Mrs. Matson brought in the evening papers and showed me the story. Let me see. Are you hurt?"

"No, mamma, I'm all right."

"Oh, look there! You are all swelled up on the right side of your head where that brute hit you."

"But it doesn't hurt one bit, mamma," he protested.

But the tender-hearted mother was very nervous and solicitous about it, and wanted to make all sorts of warm applications.

Joe wouldn't have it, though, and insisted on having his supper without any fuss being made over him.

His mother had saved his supper for him, and as he sat down to the table the three women made him tell over again the story of his adventures, which he did in a boyish kind of way.

Mrs. Dutton was both happy and very nervous. She laughed and cried by turns, and when he told her how the old veteran chief of police had treated him she was as proud as she was happy.

"If any one calls for you at night again," she said, "I won't let you go, unless I know who the person is."

"Oh, I wouldn't go out with a stranger again," said Joe, shaking his head. "I've got enough of it."

"There may be others lying in wait for you," she remarked.

"I think the pick-pockets have got enough now," he replied. "They are all broke up. Those who are not juggled have skipped. I don't think they will bother me any more."

The next morning he was up at his usual hour, and off for the morning papers.

When he got them he found a column or two in each paper about him as to his adventures, and the newsboys regarded him as the most famous personage in the city.

They held up their heads and bragged about what a real live newsboy could do.

He went to work selling his papers, and did not stop to talk to everybody who wanted to ask him questions.

But his popularity aided him in selling his papers, for he sold more on that morning than ever before in his life. He went home and gave his mother \$1.91 as the profits of his morning's work.

Just as soon as he ate his breakfast he put on his best Sunday suit and made his way down to the Tombs, to appear at the trial of the pick-pocket who had threatened to kill him if he appeared at the trial of his pal.

The court room was crowded with business men and brokers, who wanted to see the lad who had carved up the brute Olsen.

Mr. Mallory was there waiting for him, and when he saw him he took his hand and led him into the space in front of the judge, and introduced him to his lawyer.

The lawyer shook his hand cordially, and said:

"I am glad to know you, Joseph."

"Thanks, sir. I am glad to meet you, sir. Mr. Mallory is the best friend I ever had."

"Well, let me tell you that all New York is your friend this morning."

"I am glad to hear that, sir."

When the time came for him to do so Joe told his story to the judge in a quiet, modest way, which made a deep impression on all who heard it.

The result was the pickpocket was locked up in default of very heavy bail.

When Joe came out of the Tombs with Mr. Mallory and his lawyer, he was surrounded by a score of business men, who took his hand and shook it warmly. One man left a coin in his hand, which he did not have time to look it, but thrust it into his pocket, and went on shaking hands with those around him.

"I say, Joseph," said a tall, gray-haired man, "come and take dinner with us. Three of us are going to lunch now."

Joe looked up at Mr. Mallory and asked:

"Ought I to go, sir?"

"Certainly, if you feel like it."

"I do feel like it," said he, very frankly. "I am hungry enough."

The party of gentlemen laughed and at once proceeded to a well-known restaurant, where a sumptuous meal was served to them.

"Now, Joseph," said the tall, gray-headed man, "if you want a situation you can have one in my office. I'll give you four dollars a week to start with."

"Thank you, sir; I can do better than that selling papers."

"But you will have a chance to rise in the future," said the old man.

"But, I'd go down before I could rise," returned Joe, "for the land-

lord would put us out for non-payment of rent. The rent must be paid, sir, or out we go."

"Level head," remarked one of the brokers.

"My mother must have a place where she can be comfortable, and I can give her that now by selling papers."

The dinner over Joe left them and went to Mr. Mallory's office, where he looked at the coin which some one had left in his hand when he was shaking hands with him, and found that it was a five dollar gold piece.

"Joseph," said the merchant to him, after a little wait, "Mr. Ewing, the banker, has sent me word that he wanted you to come to the bank and see him. Take my card here—I've written a little note of introduction on it for you. You will find the bank at No. — Wall street. Ask for Mr. Ewing, and you will be shown into his private office. Whatever offer he makes you I would advise you to accept, as he will be the best friend you could find in New York."

"Mr. Mallory," he said, as he took the card, "don't think me ungrateful, but I cannot accept any position which will not pay me enough to support my mother. She is all I have in the world, and I am all that she has. I can pay the rent and buy food and clothes selling papers."

"Ah! You are right, my boy. Stand by your mother under all circumstances. The world will honor you for it."

Joe made his way to the office of the great banker and was shown into his private office.

"Mr. Mallory said you wished to see me, sir," he said, addressing the banker, who turned in his chair and gazed at him when he entered the room. "My name is Joseph Dutton."

"Ah! Yes," and he stretched out his hand and took Joe's in it. "I want a youth like you in the bank here, to run errands and carry confidential messages. I'll give you four dollars a week, and in the future you will receive all you are worth, if it be one thousand dollars a week."

"I am very much obliged to you, sir," said Joe. "But I cannot accept the place at that rate of wages. My mother is dependent on me for support. She is not strong like other women, but is a good, loving mother to me. I can make eight dollars a week selling papers, and that barely pays the rent and gives us food and clothes. Even to become the owner of the bank and be as rich as Vanderbilt, I could not subject her to the privations that four dollars a week would bring her to."

"My boy—you shall have eight dollars a week. Your mother shall not suffer. A good mother makes a good boy, and a good, dutiful son should be the reward of such. Come back here to-morrow morning at nine o'clock—never sooner—and go to work."

Joe expressed his gratitude and took leave of him, to return to Mr. Mallory and tell him what had been the result of his interview with Mr. Ewing.

"Ah! I congratulate you, my dear boy!" said the merchant. "Your fortune is made if you remain with him. He is a great friend of young men whom he sees trying to do right."

Joe hastened home without stopping to sell the evening papers, and told his mother of the good fortune which had befallen him. He gave her the five dollars in gold which had been given to him.

In the evening Jimmy Scott came to the house to find out why he had not been selling papers that afternoon.

"Yer see, cully," he said, "I didn't know but dey had nabbed yer again, an' wanted ter know from yer mudder."

"I'm all right, Jimmy," replied Joe, "but I am not going to sell papers any more. I'm going to stay in a bank."

"In er bank!" gasped Jimmy, almost knocked out by the news.

"Yes—I've got a situation in a bank down in Wall street."

"That settles it," said Jimmy, diving his right hand fist into the palm of the left with great force. "Yer've left us—left us, Josey, when we was so proud of yer too," and tears came into the lad's eyes as he spoke.

"I am sorry to leave you fellows, Jimmy," he said, "but it's for my good mother I am working, not for myself. It's best for her. I'll come by in the morning and sell a few papers for you just to pay you back for your kindness to me when I went down there with just one penny in my pocket."

"Good!" exclaimed Jimmy, tickled at the idea.

He went away and Joe went to bed.

The next morning he arose and ate breakfast with his mother, after which he strolled off down toward the City Hall.

When he reached there he found Jimmy Scott with an armful of papers.

"Here, Jimmy! Let me help you run 'em off," he called, and Jimmy divided his pile of papers with him.

Joe went to work and sold the papers fast, exerting himself more than he ever did before in his life.

For the last paper he sold he received a cent which attracted his attention.

He examined it and gave a shout.

"Hey, Jimmy!" he called. "Come here, quick!"

Jimmy and a dozen other boys ran over to him.

"I got this for the last paper I sold. I want it. I'll give you *two* cents for it."

"Take it—it's yourn," said Jimmy. "What's der matter wid it?"

"It's the last cent I had that morning when you bought two papers with it for me."

"Eh?"

"Yes. See that 'P' stamped on the eagle there?"

"Yes."

"Well, that's the cent. I would not take a dollar for it," and he placed it in his pocket, settled with Jimmy for his sales and then went on his way to the bank.

CHAPTER VI.

JOE MAKES A STRIKE AND WINS—THE PICKPOCKETS AGAIN—THE ATTACK.

THE return of his 'last cent' with the sale of his last paper was a coincidence that made a deep impression on Joe Dutton's mind. It was a very singular coincident to say the least, and he could not help thinking about it on his way to the bank, where he was to start in a new career.

"It means good luck, I hope," he said to himself as he neared the bank building. "I know it brought me good luck in selling papers, for I sold more papers than any of the other boys. I am going to hold on to it for luck, and keep it as long as I live."

The president of the bank put him in charge of the principal book-keeper, and he was set to work at a number of little things that required the presence of a careful hand.

Joe was careful in everything he did, doing well whatever he had to do, and never spoke to anyone except when he was spoken to. Then he was frank, pleasant and prompt in his replies.

It was the custom of the bank to close its doors at 3 P. M. every day, and a half hour later Joe was free to leave and return home if he wished.

A few days after his entrance into the employ of the bank, he said to Mr. Ewing:

"I have nothing to do after the bank closes. Would you object to my selling the afternoon papers?"

"Yes. It would not look well to have an employee of this bank selling papers on the street. Take my advice and spend your leisure time reading good books, and you will get more benefit from them than from selling papers."

"Thanks, sir. I'll do that."

"Have you any books at home?"

"No, sir—only those I studied when at school."

"I will send you some, which you must take good care of and return when you have finished reading."

Joe expressed his thanks and went away satisfied that the great banker was the best man that ever lived.

A day or two later the books came—quite a lot of them—and his mother was happy in having him in the house with her during half of each afternoon. Joe soon became deeply interested in the books, and hastened home just as soon as he could get away from the bank to resume his reading.

One day he received notice that the trial of the pickpocket whom he had caught picking Mr. Mallory's pocket was to be commenced the next day. He showed the notice to Mr. Ewing, and was excused from service at the bank that day.

He attended the trial with Mr. Mallory and his lawyer, and told his story in a straightforward way. The most rigid questioning by the prisoner's lawyer did not shake him in the least.

The prisoner was convicted and sentenced to State prison for seven years, mainly through the evidence of Joe.

He came away from the court-room with a gang of newsboys around him, every one of whom insisted on shaking hands with him, for they regarded him as belonging to themselves.

A month later Dick Olsen, whose terrible wounds had healed sufficiently for him to be tried, was arraigned before the judge who had tried the pick-pocket.

It was a murder case.

During the trial the story of his capture was told, and again all the city papers printed the details of Joe's terrible battle with him for his life.

Of course the prisoner was found guilty, for the crime was one of the most brutal which had been heard of for years. He was sentenced to be hanged.

A week later Joe was given a certified check for one thousand dollars—the promised reward for the arrest and conviction of the criminal.

Joe took the check and gazed at it in silence for a minute or two.

It seemed like a dream to him that he had so much money, and it was difficult for him to realize that it was true.

As it was the first check he had ever held in his hands he looked up and asked:

"Will they pay me \$1,000 for this check?"

"Yes," said the clerk. "You will have to write your name on the back of it, and then any bank in the city will cash it."

Joe took it to Mr. Ewing, and the banker said to him:

"Give it to the cashier and he will give you the money, or credit you with a deposit for the amount. My advice is that you let it stay there, unless your mother wished to use some of it."

"She does not wish any, sir."

"Very well. Don't give anybody any check. When you want to use any of it come in person and draw it out."

Joe felt like a rich man after that. He held up his head and felt solid, and talked like a man of business. It is surprising what a change the possession of money makes in one's feelings, thoughts and actions.

A young clerk in the bank, of the name of Clarke, took a fancy to Joe, and frequently walked up Broadway with him after banking hours. He was a very shrewd and sagacious young fellow, who kept his eye on the stock market.

One day he said to Joe.

"You have \$1,000 in the bank. I have \$2,200. I know of a chance to double it. Go in with me and we'll make it."

"What is it?" Joe asked.

"It is this. The bonds of a certain railroad are being depressed by a syndicate till they have gone down to less than one half their real value. In a week or two they will go up to their old price, and those who have them on hand will make a big pile of money."

Joe had confidence in Clarke, and that night he made up his mind to go in with him.

The next morning he drew out the \$1,000 to the astonishment of the cashier, and gave it to Clarke.

The clerk gave the sum of \$3,000 to a broker with an order to buy \$30,000 worth of the bonds of the road, on a margin of 10 per cent.

The order was quickly filled, and ten days later the reaction set in, and when the sale was made Joe's share was \$2,000, and Clarke's \$4,000.

When Joe put back \$2,000 into the bank the cashier stared at him in surprise, but made no remark.

But just before the bank opened the next morning he asked him:

"What have you been doing with your money?"

Joe told him.

He gave a low whistle, expressive of his astonishment.

"You had better look out, my boy. There's more fortunes lost than made in Wall street."

"How can that be when one's loss is another's gain?" Joe asked.

The cashier glared at him in amazement.

"You have been studying Wall street, have you?" he asked.

"A little bit," was the reply.

Several months passed, and Joe was the same plodding, deferential boy that he was on the day he entered the service of the bank.

One day a crash came in a certain line of stocks, and the young clerk Clarke whispered to Joe:

"Now is our time. I am going to put up every penny of my money. Do you want to go in with me?"

"Yes, if it's safe."

"Oh, it's safe enough. The stock will go up again in a week or two."

Joe drew out his money as quietly as before, and gave it to Clarke, who put it with his and bought \$60,000 worth of stock on a 10 per cent. margin.

They waited and watched the market. Clarke was shrewd and cautious, but had so much confidence in Joe that he conferred with him quite freely every afternoon as they walked up Broadway.

One day he said to Joe:

"The stock has gone up to 70. If we sell out now we'll have \$10,000 for our share."

"Good!" said Joe.

"But I think it will reach 80 in another week or ten days."

"Then let's wait and see."

They did wait.

It went up to 78—that is, the \$60,000 worth of stock was worth \$78,000, and at that price Clarke instructed the broker to sell out.

The sale was made, and \$18,000—minus the broker's commission, were turned over to them.

Joe's share was \$6,000, with his share of the commissions off, and Clarke's \$12,000.

"Whew!" exclaimed Joe, "I'm a rich boy!"

When he put the money in the bank the cashier stared till his eyes bulged.

He saw Joe take a penny from his pocket and kiss it, after which he put it back into his pocket very carefully.

The cashier sought the president of the bank in his private office, just as the bank closed and said to him:

"That boy Dutton is going to own this bank after awhile, sir."

Mr. Ewing looked up at him and asked:

"What's the matter now? What has he been doing?"

"Some time ago he drew out that thousand dollars and ——"

"What! Drew all his money out!"

"Yes, sir; and in a couple of weeks put \$2,000 back."

"Eh! What!"

"He put back \$2,000. A few weeks ago he drew it all out again, and to-day has \$6,000 to his credit."

The great banker was dumfounded.

"And the lad not yet seventeen years old!" he said. "Yes, yes, we will have to keep an eye on him."

That night Joe told his mother that if she wanted to buy a home he had \$6,000 which she could have.

The happy little woman was surprised, but said she would stay where she was for the present, as she was contented there.

That evening Joe went out for a walk on the Bowery, and had not gone two blocks ere he met the man who had once threatened his life for appearing as a witness against the pickpocket whose arrest he had caused.

They stopped and glared at each other for nearly a minute, when the pickpocket hissed:

"I'll fix you yet, you young wild-cat!"

"What's the matter with you?" Joe asked. "Haven't you had enough?"

"Yes, but *you* haven't," was the reply.

"Well, don't *you* try any game on me. It won't pay."

The man went on, and Joe strolled up almost as far as the Cooper Union.

On his way back he passed a crowd of a half dozen young men on the corner, who pretended to be scuffling with each other.

Just as he was passing them one of them was shoved against him with such force as to almost knock him off his feet.

Ere he could recover his balance the whole gang were scuffling around him.

He caught a glimpse of the pickpocket's face among them, and knew then that the whole thing was designed.

Quick as a flash, as he was being borne to the ground, under the sheer weight of numbers, he drew his knife, which was a good sized

piece of cutlery, and began to use it with an energy that was startling in its effect.

One after another sung out:

"I'm stabbed! I'm stabbed!" and tried to get away.

The pickpocket was doing his best to use his knife on Joe, but in the struggle the knife was knocked out of his hand.

Not knowing who it was he was cutting, Joe used his knife with terrible effect.

An officer ran up and tried to quell the disturbance.

It did not take him long to find out that the six were trying to kill or thrash the youth.

He was assisted by two citizens, and the entire party was arrested.

The pickpocket was badly cut in three places.

"He has killed me!" he groaned as he staggered to his feet.

"Didn't I tell you that it wouldn't pay you?" Joe asked.

"Who are you?" the officer asked.

"I am Joe Dutton."

"What! The lad who cut up Dick Alsen?"

"Yes."

"Well, what's all this about?"

"These fellows all jumped on me just now as I came by. That fellow there, who is a pickpocket, put them on me. I hope I have not killed him, though."

"It would be a good riddance if you have," said the officer. "Come on—we must go to the station."

He started to the station with his prisoners, a great crowd of roughs following.

When about half way there the roughs made a rush and rescued all but two of the assailants, and they got away.

But the pickpocket who instigated the attack, with another who was also badly hurt, was carried to the station-house, and a police surgeon summoned.

Then the officer, with a half dozen other officers, went in search of the other four, all of whom were more or less hurt, and in an hour they were in the station house.

Joe was still there.

The captain would not lock him up, because the officer had not made any charge against him.

Suddenly one of the wounded men cried out:

"Captain, he is a regular butcher. He came near killing the gang of us. Lock him up, too. I charge him with attempt to kill."

"It's a great pity he didn't succeed in the attempt," said the captain. "I know you fellows. You are a hard lot."

Then he said to Joe:

"I'll have to keep you here, but you can have my room, where you can make yourself comfortable on a lounge till morning."

Joe did not object, and proceeded to make himself comfortable for the night.

The morning papers had graphic accounts of the attack on young Dutton, and how he drew his knife and defended himself with such vigor as to wound the whole gang, receiving but a few bruises himself.

It created very great excitement throughout the city, and the indignation against the pickpocket was such that a call for the severest penalty was universal.

He was sent to the hospital, and, for a time, it was a question whether he would recover.

Joe received congratulations from all sides. Hundreds of men who had never seen him came to the bank to congratulate him.

A comic paper suggested that he be hired to go west and clean out the Indians, and Joe laughed at the idea.

"I don't care anything about fighting," he said to a reporter, "but when a man jumps on me like a tiger I do my best to get him off as quick as possible. That gang was going to knife me, and there were so many of them that no one could have sworn who did it. I wouldn't like to get into another scrape like that."

The rascals were speedily put on trial, and went up the river for periods of three to five years.

One would think that after such ill-luck in combating the young ex-newsboy, the pickpockets and their friends would let him alone. But they did not.

The relatives and friends of the gang which had come to such a disastrous end, were determined on revenge, and they set about deliber-

ately to attain it, taking time to bring about a combination of circumstances favorable to their plans.

CHAPTER VII.

CONCLUSION.

TIME passed, and Joe was gradually promoted in the bank till he reached the very responsible position of messenger. His salary was increased, too, till he was in receipt of one hundred dollars per month, and that, too, ere he reached his nineteenth birthday.

He had moved from the three little rooms on Broome street, to a comfortable little flat of five rooms upon Twenty-eighth, where he kept a servant for his mother.

Widow, though she was, Mrs. Dutton was the happiest little woman in the city. Joe was kind, loving and indulgent to her.

He petted her like a spoiled child, and would not let her do any household work at all.

"No, little mamma," he would say to her. "You have done your share of work. It is time you had a rest. Let the roses come back to your cheeks again and you'll be the prettiest little girl in New York," and then he would kiss her and go off to his work.

Mr. Morris was one of the old book-keepers in the bank. He had been there over twenty years, and was one of the most trusted employees of the institution.

He was a widower, with one daughter, a beautiful girl of some eighteen summers.

Bessie Morris used to call at the bank just at the closing hour, to walk up home with her father.

On one of these walks her father introduced Joe to her.

She had read the newspaper accounts of him, and already regarded him as a young hero.

It is not to be wondered at, then, that she soon fell desperately in love with him, a fact which gave her father the greatest satisfaction, as Joe's \$6,000 had now reached three times that sum.

She managed to have Joe walk with her and her father several times.

The old book-keeper soon managed to leave them to take the walk by themselves, and they got along swimmingly.

By and by Joe invited her and her father to take tea with him and his mother, and that is the way the two families became acquainted.

Mrs. Dutton liked Bessie very much, and Bessie declared that she was the sweetest little mother she had ever seen.

Mr. Morris became a frequent visitor at the flat—always accompanied by his daughter, and sometimes Joe and his mother rode up-town on the horse-cars to visit them in their elegant home.

One day Joe was sent to a Broadway bank to collect a large sum of money on a draft which had come to the house in the course of business.

As he came out of the bank a close carriage followed him up to Broadway, and thence up several blocks to the bank.

He entered the bank, presented the draft, and received the bank's certified check in exchange for it.

When he came out of the bank the carriage was drawn up to the curbstone, and the coachman said to him:

"Miss Morris is in the carriage, sir, and wants you to ride down to the bank with her."

"Ah, yes," and he started to the carriage.

There sat a young lady, with a veil partly down over her face.

She bowed and smiled sweetly as she made way for him to a seat at her side.

"You are down-town rather early to-day," he said, and then seeing a beautiful bouquet of flowers in her lap, took them up and held them to his nose.

Their fragrance was delicious, and he held them there till his hand fell to his knees and his chin sank down on his chest.

A terrible drug in the bouquet had overcome him, and he was utterly unconscious of his surroundings.

In a moment the woman, who was not the daughter of the old book-keeper, but a beautiful siren of the criminal class, pulled down the curtains on either side and signaled to the driver to go faster.

He drove faster, but not so fast as to attract attention, and, after going a dozen blocks or so, turned toward the East river.

After turning into several streets the carriage finally stopped in

front of an old red brick house, and the driver dismounted and rang the bell.

The door was opened by a man with a black beard.

A few whispered words passed and then they went out to the carriage.

On opening the door the female alighted and ran into the house.

When Joe was taken out he was dressed as a female.

The siren had made the change in his appearance while in the carriage.

He was lifted out and conveyed into the house by the black-bearded man and the driver of the carriage.

In the house he was deposited on a lounge, and the driver went out, mounted to his seat and drove away.

Then the door was locked by the man, who turned to the woman and asked:

"What did he have in his pockets?"

"A watch and chain, some change, and a check for \$13,000."

The man ground his teeth with disappointment and rage.

"Let me see the check," he said.

She gave him the check.

He looked at it and said:

"It is no good to us, as it's made payable to the bank, and the bank's indorsement is lacking. Ten thousand maledictions on our luck! Why didn't they give him the cash instead of the check?"

"It would have been a big haul," said the woman.

"Yes, and we could have left the country and had a good time in Europe."

"Well, we'll have to wait a little longer for that, I suppose. But what shall we do with him?"

"Oh, we have an old grudge against him, and now is the time to settle it. I'll dump him into the river to-night."

"I wouldn't do that," she said.

"Why not?"

"It looks awful to do one so young in that way."

"Why he has done the gang more mischief than all the police of New York!"

"Maybe he has, but you can hardly blame him for that. Any man will fight for his life."

"Of course, but he is such a wildcat that I want to wind him up. He sent six of the boys up, after we did all in our power to persuade him to let up. What's come over you, Nell?"

"Oh, nothing, only I don't like to think about one so young being wiped out that way."

"Well, don't think about it, that's the way to do."

Joe lay there on the lounge like one in a deep, dreamless sleep.

The dose he had received was enough to keep him under its influence four and twenty hours.

The man went out to look at the docks down at the foot of the street, leaving the young woman in charge of the house.

She gazed at the youth as he lay there on the lounge, and muttered to herself:

"So young, so handsome and brave! What a pity! If I thought I could win him, I'd save him at the risk of my own life, for I like his looks. He is true as steel, and would not look at such as I. Yet I brought him here, and his death will lie heavy on my soul," and she turned pale as she sat there and gazed at the youth. "I'll save him if I can. If I can't do any better I'll drug Jim, and keep him that way till Dutton can get away. I won't have his death on my hands. I am bad enough, the Lord knows, but not so bad as that—no, not so bad as that."

The man Jim returned to the house after an hour's absence, and got a bag large enough to hold the body of the youth.

That he laid away in a rear room, and then waited for night to come that he might put his plan into execution.

The woman Nell was more and more determined to rescue the youth, for she had fallen in love with him, and she had the faint hope that she might win him through gratitude for what she might do for him.

Whilst waiting for night to come the man with the black beard fell asleep on a sofa at the other end of the room.

When she heard him snore Nell crept softly up to him, drew a small phial from the pocket of her dress, drew the cork and held it to his nose.

In a minute or two his snoring ceased, and he sank into a heavy sleep which even an earthquake could not arouse him from.

"Now!" she exclaimed, triumphantly, her face all aglow. "You will do no murder this night, Jim Burroughs, I'll save you from that crime at least, though I could not from others."

Then she hastened to remove the female apparel which had been placed on the youth, leaving him in his proper suit of clothes. It was soon done, for she was handy in all she did.

The clothes removed she set about the task of overcoming the drug he had inhaled.

She knew that Jim who had formerly been a chemist had an antidote for all his poisons and deadly drugs, and that the one for this case must be among them somewhere.

She took a small key from his pocket and went to a desk in the little back parlor. There she unlocked several drawers and searched among the phials till she found the one she wanted.

As she was quite familiar with them she had no fears that she would make a mistake.

She knew the phial the moment she saw it.

"This is the one," she said. "I've seen him use it. It is harmless."

She went to the lounge on which Joe Dutton was lying, knelt by his side and held the uncorked phial by his nose for a minute or two.

By and by he moved, like one in a restless sleep.

Then he groaned, raised a hand above his head, as if feeling for something, and then opened his eyes and stared at the young woman.

"You are better now," she said, in low, soft tones.

He stared at her in a half-dazed sort of way, and asked:

"Eh? What did you say?"

"I said you were better now."

"Why, what has been the matter? Where am I? Who is that man asleep over there?" and he raised himself to a sitting posture on the lounge and gazed at the lovely face in front of him.

"Hush-sh!" she said. "Don't talk so loud. I'll tell you how you came here. I overheard them talking. I live two doors from here, but when they drove away I came in here to see if I could not effect your escape. What I am going to tell you I heard them talking about, and what I didn't hear you may be able to make out yourself."

"Yes, said Joe, in a half whisper. "Go on and tell me all."

"It seems that the man and woman who live here are connected with a gang of pick-pockets and that they have an old grudge against you."

"Yes—yes, so they have."

"They have been watching for a long time to get a chance to get you in their power, and I judge from what I heard that they sent a young girl in a carriage, with a veil over her face so as to prevent you recognizing her, and then make you believe that some lady friend of yours wished to have you ride with her."

"Yes yes," and Joe glared at her in the deepest mental excitement as she spoke.

"The moment you were seated by her side she was to offer you a bouquet of flowers, which had been drugged so as to produce unconsciousness."

"Yes, yes—go on!" and Joe actually rose to his feet in his terrible excitement.

"While you were unconscious you were brought here, and the man asleep over there received you in his arms and laid you here. I think he must have inhaled some of the perfume himself, for he sleeps like a dead man. The lady drove off in her carriage, and I slipped in here to see if I could not save you."

"You have saved my life, I've no doubt," said Joe, taking both her hands in his and looking her full in the face, "and my eternal gratitude shall be yours. I must get away from here as quick as I can. Ah! they have robbed me of my watch and chain, and even my small change is gone."

"Here, I have some change. You can have it all—I—I'll look for your watch and chain," and she went over to the man and gently searched his pockets till she produced them.

"I don't know if these are yours," she said.

"Yes—they are mine."

She gave them to him.

Then she found the check and gave that to him also.

"Ah! how can I ever repay you for what you have done for me?" he said.

"Tak me away with you," she said. "They will kill me when they find out that I came in here."

Joe was amazed.

"The neighbors will tell them that I was seen coming in here. Oh, take me away! I'll be as a sister to you, and will work for my support and not cost you a dollar. I have nowhere to go."

"But your own home—your parents, what will they say?"

"My mother is dead, and my father is a dissipated man. My life is one of misery at home."

"Then come with me, and I'll take you where you will be safe," and they left the house together.

Out on the street she said:

"Give me the number of the place you want me to go to, and I'll go back home and get my trunk before my father comes home. Don't send me to *your* home, for you will be watched."

Joe did not know where to send her, so he said:

"Go to some little hotel till I can find a place for you—say at the — House on Sixth avenue."

"Yes—yes—I'll go there. I'll be there with my trunk in two hours. But I can't stay there but one night, as the gang, who may swear to have my life, may find me out. Will you come there to see me?"

"Yes. I'll find a place for you where you'll be safe enough, and call there for you," and he pressed her hand in his and parted with her.

He hastened up the street till he struck a cross-town street-car and boarded it.

When he reached the Bowery he knew where he was, and proceeded at once to the residence of Mr. Ewing, whom he found at home.

"Why, Dutton, where have you been?" the banker demanded. "Your absence at the bank created the greatest excitement."

Joe quickly told him the story, and the old banker was dumfounded. It seemed past all credibility that such a thing should happen right in the heart of the most populous city on the continent.

Joe gave him the bank check for \$13,000, which the banker took and at once sent word to all the papers that he had turned up all right.

When he arrived at home he found out that a half dozen reporters had been there to ask questions about him.

He soon explained matters, and then ate a hearty meal, after which he left the house again to go up to the hotel on Sixth avenue. There he met the young woman, Nelly, and spent an hour with her in the ladies' parlor, during which time she told him a story that touched his sympathies deeply.

"I'll look for a situation where I can earn my own living," she said, "and if you will come and see me often I know I shall be happy."

"I'll be sure to do that," said Joe. "To-morrow I'll find a quiet home-like place for you, where board will be cheap, and your expenses light. If you need any financial assistance let me know."

He went away, and in bed that night he was wondering what he should do about acquainting his mother with what he was doing for the young woman who had saved his life.

But he decided to say nothing about it to her until after several days.

As might have been expected the morning papers had some very exaggerated accounts of the abduction, and one of them mentioned the woman in the case.

Joe was terribly annoyed.

When he called at the hotel up on Sixth avenue he was dumfounded at being told that a detective had come there and arrested her as the pal of one of the worst criminals in the city.

Joe went out on the sidewalk and pulled off his hat to let the cool breeze play on his fevered brow.

Great drops of perspiration stood out on his forehead.

"It seems like a dream," he said to himself. "I can't understand it. If she was in with those villains, why did she defend and befriend me? I owe her gratitude, and am not afraid to show it."

But he never saw her again.

She managed to escape any penalty, and disappeared from the city, as did the man Jim, and Joe never again heard of either of them.

That was the last attempt the criminals made upon him, and he went on in the even tenor of his way.

One day he was told that a ring to boom certain stocks was formed, and he at once bought a big lot of it.

In ten days his bank account was over \$50,000, and then the boom collapsed.

He had sold out in time, and had his money in the bank.

Again he took out that little penny, which had a "P" stamped on it, and repeatedly kissed it for good luck.

Mr. Ewing asked him about the penny, and got the story from his lips. He regarded it as a singular story, saying it was a romance which he would not forget.

By and by Joe declared to Bessie Morris, the pretty daughter of the old book-keeper in the bank, that he loved her, and asked her to be his wife.

She accepted him then and there, and the day for their union set, though their parents had not been consulted about it. Both knew, however, that their parents would give their blessing without demur.

That evening in their respective homes, they told their parents of their engagement.

Mrs. Dutton was glad and happy over the news.

So was Mr. Morris.

"I won't leave you though, mother," said Joe. "You shall live with me as long as either of us shall live."

"I don't know whether that would be right or not," she replied,

"for I'm going to be married too," and she blushed like a school girl when she made the announcement.

Joe nearly leaped out of his skin when he heard that his dear little mother was going to be married again. He glared at her in speechless amazement, and then sank down in a chair too much overcome even to think.

"The day you take Bessie Morris to wife," said Mrs. Dutton, "will see me the wife of her father."

Joe sprang up and caught her in his arms.

He was willing to have it that way.

"You sly puss," he said, pinching her cheek. "How long have you been engaged?"

"Over three months. We've been waiting for you and Bessie to come to an understanding. When shall the double wedding be?"

It was a happy arrangement, and in due time the ceremony which united the two families was performed.

Joe and Bessie took a trip together, and returned a few weeks later to settle down near their parents to get all the happiness they could out of the married state.

"Reader, Joe Dutton is now a *millionaire*, but he carries in his pocket yet the cent which was once all the money he had in the world. He would not take \$10,000 for it. It brought him good luck, and as he fondles it he says to his children that it was once His LAST CENT.

[THE END.]

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